

# **Congressman Wally Herger**

## ***Honoring Our Fallen in Uniform***

**Sutter Memorial Day Observance; May 30, 2011**

**(Remarks as prepared)**

---

Good morning. Thank you for the invitation to join you today as we honor and remember all who gave their lives to gain and defend our nation's freedom. It's an honor to celebrate Memorial Day with you. I would like to thank the Sutter Cemetery District, our local veteran's groups and Blue Star Moms, the Honor Guard and General McGillicuddy and all the men and women of Beale Air Force Base. Our nation is truly blessed to have such distinguished and dedicated troops and family members who support them.

Like many of you, I have had the privilege of walking thru Arlington National Cemetery just outside our nation's capital. Fallen troops from every war that our nation has fought are buried or reinterred there. When I pay my respects there, I am reminded that our nation's rise to unrivaled strength and prosperity could not have occurred but for the ultimate sacrifices of millions of Americans. These Americans left their families, their homes, their livelihoods, and their personal pursuits for a cause greater than themselves. They did so for a nation they loved. They did so to protect a set of inalienable rights that have defined the American story—we are endowed by our Creator with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. For these Americans, selfish ambition gave way to a national cause. That is the spirit of Memorial Day and why we must never forget to honor the fallen.

Americans serving in uniform today have likewise chosen to put nation ahead of self. Since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, they have fought with tremendous courage and skill in Afghanistan and Iraq to help transform terrorist sanctuaries into American allies. These missions have been tough and the sacrifices have been substantial. I would like to pause today to especially recognize the 18 brave Americans from California's Second Congressional District who have given their lives during these missions to defend our national security.

The families of these patriotic Americans, along with all of the veterans who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq, can be proud of what they have achieved. Our nation is more secure now that al Qaeda no longer has a safe haven in Afghanistan to plot attacks, and that Saddam Hussein's brutal dictatorship has been forever eliminated. They can also be

proud that they have brought to justice the mastermind of 9/11, Osama Bin Laden, who had fled to Pakistan. While terrorist threats will remain, Bin Laden's demise was a devastating blow to Al Qaeda and other extremists across the globe. Moving forward, I believe we must continue to follow the recommendations of General Petraeus and other commanders on the ground as we determine our next steps in Afghanistan and Iraq. Abandoning these missions prematurely would risk the successes our troops have made.

In closing, we cannot adequately express our gratitude to those who defend our nation in uniform, and especially those who died to obtain and protect our cherished freedoms. May God bless and protect our active duty troops and their families, and may He continue to bless our nation.